Writing your own play is as daunting as much as it is an exciting prospect. We have expert playwright, performer and Introduction to Playwriting tutor, Orion on-hand to offer some advice on how to get started.

Hi Orion, what would you say to someone who wants to have a go at writing their first play but feels overwhelmed by the prospect of starting?

I meet many people who come to playwriting for the first time feeling intimidated by the form. There is often a misconception that there must be all sorts of hidden tricks of the trade and complex guidelines as to what works and what will never work on stage. There are definitely some tools that can be helpful in starting out, but the opinion that there is the playwright's secret handshake. This is a myth which most likely stems from old-fashioned ideas of theatre being for an elite class. Theatre is changing all the time and there is more room now than ever for anyone, with any level of experience, to be heard. The most popular plays of late have been written by people who simply had an idea and decided to put it into script form.

When someone feels overwhelmed by the prospect of "the full-length play" I recommend they start considering the stories they would like to see but are not seeing represented.

What are the challenges of becoming a successful playwright?

One of the greatest challenges is following through with your idea. After a couple of months ploughing away at your script you will inevitably find a new idea and this new idea will seem infinitely better than the one you are currently working on. Over half the fight is down to following through with the script you started out with. Stick with it. Stick with it. Stick with it.

In that case, do you have any tips for following through with ideas?

It's important to discover for yourself:

Once you interrogate what really works for you then you can start to structure your writing life around this knowledge. Some sense of structure is vital when it comes to following through with your script.

Where do you get ideas from?

Ideas come from all over the place. Conversations you overhear on public transport. News articles. Other art forms. Many playwrights treat their script as a way to think through a personal conflict. For instance, as a visibly queer person, I am interested in asking the urgent questions about how we survive and maintain voice through the cycles of violence upon our identities.

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BOOK NOW

Our 10-week short course, Introduction to Playwriting, starts Wednesday 1st May 2019.

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